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ABSTRACT

This survey examines the types of speech communication courses offered in college curricula across the country and reports on the methodologies employed in such courses. Randomly selected college catalogs were sampled to determine the extent to which traditional and new courses are included in speech communication curricula. There does not seem to be a basis for determining the extent to which speech communication curricula are changing from practices of the past, but there is evidence that new approaches are having an impact on the curricula. (The evidence is presented in both narrative and tabular form.) (RB)

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A Research Note:
A Survey of Colleges Offering Selected, "New" Courses in Speech Communication

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Considerable discussion has been devoted to examination of the types of phenomena that speech communication should study and to the methodologies that should be employed.[1] A major conference in New Orleans was devoted to defining the parameters of communication study,[2] and the nature of the study of rhetoric was the subject of another conference.[3] Both conferences urged new conceptualizations of speech communication and new research questions and problems. To the extent that these recommendations have been followed, one ought to notice reported research which reflects changes from previous orientations.[4] Further, the types of courses which are taught ought to represent a new orientation if the recommendations are followed.[5] This study addresses itself to a determination of the extent to which "new" courses are being included in college curriculums. Specifically, three courses were selected which seemed "traditional" in the speech communication curriculum and three "new" courses were chosen which were probably not taught prior to the New Orleans conference in 1968. College catalogs from across the country were then sampled to determine the extent to which "traditional" and "new" courses are included in speech communication curriculums.

"Basic courses," such as interpersonal communication, were not selected for study. Rather, selected "specialized" courses were surveyed which seemed to represent a department's orientation preferences among the many courses which could be offered. To facilitate coding, courses were chosen whose titles and descriptions clearly indicated their contents; this expediency may have introduced a bias into the study. The "traditional" courses were ethics, freedom of speech, and parliamentary procedure. The

"new" courses were interviewing or dyadic communication, intercultural (trans-racial, international, etc.) communication, and nonverbal communication.

College catalogs were randomly selected from those available. In addition, a quota sample was utilized. The number of schools in each state was determined by consulting the Roster of Institutions in the Directory of the Speech Communication Association.[6] The sample was to represent at least one-third of the number of institutions listed for each state; the sample often exceeded the minimum quota. As such, this study probably represents at least one-third of the colleges in the country. Just as the SCA Directory does not discriminate between two year and four year colleges, nor does this survey so discriminate.

(Table I about here or as soon hereafter as possible.)

The results of the study are reported in Table One. Parliamentary Procedure, a "traditional" course, is by far the most often listed course in all sections of the country. In light of the rationale for the study, this is a curious finding because teaching and research in parliamentary procedure would not seem at all affected by a "new" speech communication orientation. Indeed, perhaps its prominence in these findings indicates that a "new" curriculum has not yet taken hold.

An opposite conclusion is also possible by inspection of the data reported here. Two "new" courses, intercultural communication and nonverbal communication, hold their own very well in comparison to the other two "traditional" courses, ethics and freedom of speech; in no section of the country does the number of schools offering either "traditional" course exceed the number of schools offering either "new" course. Even the least popular "new" course is offered by more schools in all areas of the country than an ethics course.

The data in Table One does not lend itself to statistical tests of probability, but some generalizations regarding regional orientations are possible. For example, western schools lead all other regions in the extent to which they offer "new" courses. Indeed, western schools lead all other regions in offering all of these specialized courses, except for parliamentary procedure. Further, central states schools offer more of these specialized courses than southern and eastern schools, and they tend to teach parliamentary procedure more often than schools in other regions. It is difficult to speculate about the importance or implications of these findings.

(Table II about here or as soon hereafter as possible.)

The collected data also indicates the extent to which courses are offered on a graduate and undergraduate level. However, as reported in Table Two, the findings are not particularly revealing. Since there are many fewer schools with both graduate and undergraduate programs than schools with only undergraduate programs, it is not surprising that all of these courses are offered most often on the undergraduate level. On the other hand, a course in ethics, though not often included in curriculums, is almost as pervasive on the graduate level as on the undergraduate. Also, parliamentary procedure is nearly always offered as an undergraduate course.

There seems no baseline to determine the extent to which these findings represent a change from the past. However, to the extent that these courses are representative of the status quo in speech communication curriculums, there seems excellent evidence that "new" approaches are having an impact on the curriculums.

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[1]For example: Wayne N. Thompson, "A Conservative View of Progressive Rhetoric," Quarterly Journal of Speech XLIX (February, 1963), 1-7; Otis M. Walter, "On Views of Rhetoric, Whether Conservative or Progressive," Quarterly Journal of Speech XLIX (December, 1963), 367-382; Everett L. Hunt, "Classical Rhetoric and Modern Communicology," Western Speech XXXIV (Winter, 1970), 2-7; John L. Vohs, "The Colossal Metaphor: Uses of Measurement in Communication Research," Western Speech XXXIV (Spring, 1970), 100-107; Kenneth R. Williams, "Speech Communication Research: One World or Two?," Central States Speech Journal XXI (Fall, 1970), 175-180; Carroll C. Arnold, "Rhetorical and Communication Studies: Two Worlds or One?," Western Speech XXXVI (Spring, 1972), 75-81; John E. Gow, "'Public Speaking' or 'Communication': Comprehensive Change in the Speech Curriculum," Today's Speech XX (Fall, 1972), 21-24.

[2]Robert J. Kibler and Larry L. Barker, ed., Conceptual Frontiers in Speech-Communication (New York: Speech Communication Association, 1969).

[3]Lloyd F. Bitzer and Larry L. Barker, ed., The Prospect of Rhetoric (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1971); James E. Roever, "New Orleans, Wingspread, and Pheasant Run Briefly Revisited," Western Speech XXXVIII (Winter, 1974), 7-12.

[4]For example, Kibler and Barker, p. 22: "Recommendation 5: The conferees encourage speech-communication scholars to be informed of relevant contributions from related fields, to make their findings available to scholars in related areas of study and to participate in appropriate research programs with scholars in other areas of study." Also, Bitzer and Black, p. 225: "1. Rhetorical criticism must broaden its scope to examine the full range of rhetorical transactions; that is, informal conversations, group

settings, public settings, mass media messages, picketing, sloganeering, chanting, singing, marching, gesturing, institutional and cultural symbols, cross cultural transactions, and so forth." /emphasis added/

[5]For example, Kibler and Barker, p. 27: "Recommendation 16: The conference participants strongly encourage academic units in our area to develop a scientifically based instructional program in speech-communication." Also, Bitzer and Black, p. 215: "3. We encourage departments offering undergraduate courses involving rhetoric to experiment with new subject matters and formats which emphasize discovery, participation, and application to the contemporary scene. For example, we suggest:

. . . . . .

c. Curricular investigations of cross-cultural, inter-cultural, and intra-cultural communication.

d. Curricular investigations of how linguistic and other media of communication function in various settings, past and present.

. . . . . .

h. Courses which investigate dialogue as an informing principle in rhetorical transactions."

[6]Robert N. Hall, ed. (New York: Speech Communication Association), pp. 290-325.

TABLE I: Number of Colleges in Regional Organizations Offering Selected Courses*

Region	Number of Schools	Ethics	Free Speech	Parliamentary Procedure	Interviewing	Intercultural Communication	Nonverbal Communication
Western	118	5.93%	9.32%	27.12%	9.32%	18.64%	12.72%
Central States	179	4.47%	7.26%	36.87%	5.03%	15.08%	8.38%
Southern	134	2.24%	4.48%	33.58%	3.73%	8.21%	2.24%
Eastern	104	1.49%	4.81%	26.92%	2.88%	12.5%	5.77%
All Schools	535	3.73%	6.17%	31.96%	5.23%	13.64%	7.29%

*Western Speech Communication Association: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming; Central States Speech Association: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Wisconsin; Southern Speech Communication Association: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia; Eastern Communication Association: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia.

TABLE II: Number of Undergraduate and Graduate Curriculums Offering Selected Courses

	Ethics	Free Speech	Parliamentary Procedure	Interviewing	Intercultural Communication	Nonverbal Communication
Undergraduate	11	25	165	20	51	31
Graduate	9	10	6	8	22	8